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BIO, Lt. GEN. JOE WILLIAM KELLY

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BIOGRAPHY

OF

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOE WILLIAM KELLY

COMMANDER, MILITARY AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS

Lt. Gen. Joe William Kelly, 50, assumed command of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) at its Scott AFB, Ill., headquarters June 1, 1960. He was formerly commander of the Air Proving Ground Center at Eglin AFB, Fla. His promotion to lieutenant general was concurrent with the assumption of his new command.

One of his first tasks was to supervise a massive mercy airlift to Chile where he had served as a member of the U. S. Military Mission earlier in his career.

Gen. Kelly was born in Waverly, Ind., Jan. 19, 1910. He was graduated from high school in Martinsville, Ind., in 1927 and attended Depauw University, Greencastle, Ind., for one year. In 1928, he entered the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y., and was graduated in June, 1932, with a commission as a second lieutenant in the Infantry.

After completing flying school in 1933, Gen. Kelly was assigned to the 94th Pursuit Squadron at Selfridge Field, Mich., the same unit to which Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker was assigned in World War I, and whose hat-in-th-ring insignia is still borne by a jet fighter-interceptor squadron of the Air Defense Command. From February to May, 1934, Gen. Kelly was an air mail pilot for the Army Air Corps, flying from Newark, N.J., and Columbus, Ohio. Later he instructed student pilots at Randolph Field, Tex.

Moving to Santiago, Chile, in 1940, he was a member of the U. S. Military Mission in that country for three years. He returned to MacDill Field, Fla., for six months and in June, 1943, was transferred to the European theater of operations. In January, 1944, he became commander of the 386th Bomb Group (Medium), 9th Air Force, a B-26 medium bomber unit. While under Gen. Kelly's leadership, this group attained the most outstanding record of any B-26 unit in the European theater of operation in terms of number of successful sorties flown, tonnage of bombs dispatched, and the enemy aircraft destroyed while at the same time maintaining the highest bombing accuracy score.

M O R E

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Upon Gen. Kelly's departure from the group, he received this commendation from his division commander: "On the occasion of your departure for another assignment, I desire to commend you for the loyal, aggressive and efficient manner in which you discharged all duties assigned you. I commend you particularly for your aggressive leadership while commanding the 386th Bombardment Group (M). This aggressive leadership, together with your efficient administration of the Group, was directly responsible for its receiving a unit citation awarded for compiling the outstanding record made by any medium bombardment group during its first year of operations in this theater."

Gen. Kelly remained in Europe in various command and staff positions until December, 1944, when he returned to West Point to be Director of Aviation.

He enrolled in the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., in the summer of 1946. After graduation, he served as an instructor and then Chief of Plans and Operations Division.

In January, 1948, the general began a five and one-half year association with the Strategic Air Command (SAC), commanding various SAC bomber units including the Far East Air Forces Bomber Command at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

In 1953 he was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D. C., as Director of Legislative Liaison. In this position he was responsible for the planning and development of public laws affecting the U. S. Air Force and for furthering Air Force relations and liaison with Congress. For his exceptionally meritorious service in this position, Gen. Kelly was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal by Secretary of the Air Force James Douglas.

On July 21, 1958, Gen. Kelly assumed command of the Air Proving Ground Center at Eglin AFB, Fla.

His other decorations include: the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters, the Belgian and French Croix de Guerre, the British Distinguished Service Order, the Chilean Legion of Merit, the Army Commendation Ribbon and others.

Gen. Kelly and his wife, the former Virginia Johnson of Paxton, Ill., are the parents of three children. They are John Michael, Katherine, and Virginia Elizabeth. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James R. Kelly, 1712 Franklin St., Columbus, Ind.